

My name is Randi Friedman and I am a retired Social Worker with over 30 years of experience working to help families move out of poverty. Today I will share the story of "Joan" a 60 year old woman living in Flint. I met Joan in 2016 as I served as a volunteer going door to door offering families bottled water, water filters, and education on preventing/mitigating the effects of lead exposure.

Joan had been serving as an unofficial block captain as many of her neighbors are older than her and have limited mobility. Joan began volunteering well beyond her block to help other families affected by the water crisis.

Joan is a survivor of childhood abuse. She is also a breast cancer survivor. Yet Joan is resourceful, industrious and constantly seeking opportunities to improve her own life and the life of her community. Joan is a felon who after serving prison time out of state where she received proper treatment, completely turned her life around. Joan then returned to Flint to obtain guardianship of her granddaughter to avoid her entry into the foster care system. Additionally in attempt to break the cycle of poverty, Joan volunteers at her granddaughter's school and has sought out tutoring and other affordable enrichment opportunities.

Since Joan has returned to Flint she has worked hard to be financially independent. She had no transportation and relied on public transportation and her bicycle. After applying for jobs with out success Joan sought out a job training program. She was a star pupil and was asked to give the graduation speech to her peers. Although the program increased Joan's skills and confidence, finding a job as a felon is not easy. It took several months and a willingness to make arrangements for her granddaughter, so that Joan could leave home at 5 a.m. to arrive at work. Joan works regularly at her part time job where she is offered 2-3 shifts a week, well short of the 29 hours required to receive Medicaid in SB 0897. She has been in chronic pain for several months and has been waiting for 2 months to see a specialist. Yet she maintains her job.

I do not know if Joan is aware of the proposed Medicaid changes. I have not discussed this with her because I am concerned about adding stress to her life as making ends meet currently is a daily struggle. I am hopeful that our legislators will understand that placing such requirements on healthcare does not help move families beyond poverty. In fact it is harmful not only to adults but to children if their parents cannot receive healthcare.

Joan's story is one of many such families in Michigan. I hope you will really take time to consider the impact of this change.

Thank you,

Randi Friedman

599 Liberty Pointe Drive

Ann arbor, MI 48103